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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [GCC](#) [IR](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: READOUT ON GCC SUMMIT FROM THE DOHA ORGANIZER

REF: A. DOHA 1133
[1](#)B. DOHA 1127

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Michael A. Ratney,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

QATAR-SAUDI RELATIONS ON THE MEND

[1](#)1. (C) MFA Director of GCC Affairs Yousef Al-Jaber (strictly protect), who was the organizer of the December 3-4 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in Doha, provided P/E Chief December 5 a readout of the event and the preparations leading up to it. Had it not been for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad's participation, observed Al-Jaber, the headline of the summit would have been Saudi King Abdullah's appearance. To ensure the King's participation, Abdullah and the Amir of Qatar had formed a bilateral joint committee to address remaining difficulties in the relationship. The main Saudi complaint had been "objectionable" Al-Jazeera coverage of the Kingdom's ruling family and government policies. According to Al-Jaber, Al-Jazeera has taken steps to correct the Saudi perception, and King Abdullah would "soon" post an ambassador to Qatar.

AHMEDINEJAD HELD UP HIS END OF THE BARGAIN

[1](#)2. (C) On the issuance of the invitation to Ahmedinejad, Al-Jaber said the Iranian FM, in the lead up to the December summit, solicited an invitation for Ahmedinejad from all his GCC counterparts. This, he said, is why the Kuwaiti FM's public assertion in Doha that he learned of Ahmedinejad's visit from the newspapers amounted to a "double standard." After consultation with the other GCC members, Qatar as the host extended Ahmedinejad an invitation, as it did to the heads of a number of regional states. Al-Jaber said it was not by design that only Ahmedinejad accepted the invitation. After the invitations were issued, he remarked, it was as if "an invisible hand" interceded to prevent other leaders from attending. For example, Egyptian President Mubarak canceled for health reasons; his Turkish counterpart regretted, preferring to visit Doha on a state visit in early 2008; and the Yemeni President -- who had eagerly sought an invitation based on Yemen's interest in becoming a GCC member -- ultimately declined to travel.

[1](#)3. (C) Al-Jaber expressed satisfaction that Ahmedinejad abided by his commitment to the GCC not to include "sensitive topics" in his remarks at the summit. Al-Jaber identified the United States and the nuclear portfolio as two examples of topics the Iranian President was told to avoid on condition of his appearance. By design, said Al-Jaber, the heads of state did not discuss the nuclear portfolio, the GCC

leaders having agreed ahead of time that their first group meeting with Ahmedinejad should aim to establish a working relationship that would facilitate discussion of the nuclear issue at a subsequent meeting. While Al-Jaber would not say if any private messages were passed to Ahmedinejad in Doha, he stressed that the Iranian President had been told authoritatively that the GCC states expected Iran to comply fully with all IAEA requirements.

GCC STICKING WITH THE DOLLAR

¶4. (C) Asked if the heads of state discussed the pegging of their currencies to the U.S. dollar, Al-Jaber stated that there had been no discussion of the topic. Prior to the summit, he said, it was decided that the GCC Finance Ministers would meet in January or February to establish a common position on the dollar and inform the United States of the GCC position following their meeting. The Finance Ministers would not, however, be discussing the pegging of their nations' currencies to a basket of currencies. Their marching orders were to "stick with the dollar." Turning to other economic issues, Al-Jaber lamented that pre-summit discussions were not conducive to making tangible progress on forming a GCC customs union. He cited the UAE's insistence on collecting for its coffers duties on any goods passing through Dubai as one of the primary hurdles to be surmounted before any progress in this area could be made.
RATNEY